

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKAJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUXEMBOURG 0191

EXDIS

USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO EEC LU
SUBJECT: CONSULTATIONS WITH NATO ALLIES

REF: STATE 038167

1. FROM MY VANTAGE POINT A STUDY OF THE PATTERN OF US-ALLIED
CONSULTATIONS IS MOST TIMELY. PRIME MINISTER THORN HAS RAISED
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 LUXEMB 00191 161638Z

THE QUESTION WITH ME ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS AND HAS POINTED OUT
THAT HE IS ALSO REFLECTING THE VIEWS OF SOME OF THE OTHER SMALL-
ER STATES WHO RESENT WHAT THEY SEE AS A CONTINUING DRIFT
TOWARD THE QUADRIPARITE MANAGEMENT OF ALLIANCE AFFAIRS.

2. THE PROBLEM, OF COURSE, IS NOT NEW. QUADRIPARTITE DIPLO-
MACY HAS BEEN A CONSTANT FEATURE OF US POLICY IN EUROPE OVER

THE PAST TWENTY YEARS. IT HAS BEEN STRONG AT TIMES, WEAK AT OTHERS, BUT ALWAYS PRESENT. EVERY ADMINISTRATION SINCE THE WAR HAS FOUND IT ADVANTAGEOUS TO DEAL ONLY WITH THE BRITISH, FRENCH AND GERMANS ON SOME ISSUES BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY IN REACHING A DECISION OR CONSENSUS WHEN MORE COUNTRIES ARE INVOLVED. THORN RECOGNIZES THAT CONSULTATION WITH A LIMITED NUMBER OF COUNTRIES IS A SENSIBLE, PERHAPS EVEN A NECESSARY PROCEDURE ON SOME ISSUES, BUT HE HAS THE IMPRESSION, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, THAT MANY EUROPEANS BELIEVE THAT THE UNITED STATES IS INCREASINGLY DISPOSED TO DEAL ON A QUADRIpartite BASIS NOT ONLY ON SOME BUT ON MOST EUROPEAN QUESTIONS AND CERTAINLY ON THE MOST SENSITIVE ONES. THE CONTROVERSY REGARDING SALT BRIEFINGS IS AN OBVIOUS CASE IN POINT.

3. FOR EUROPEANS WHO ARE NOT PART OF THE QUADRIpartite PROCESS, THERE ARE PARTICULARLY GALLING ASPECTS TO OUR DEALING EXCLUSIVELY WITH THE BRITISH -- WHOM THEY REGARD AS THE MOST RELUCTANT MEMBERS OF THE EC AND THE PRINCIPAL OBSTACLE TOWARD FURTHER UNIFICATION, THE FRENCH -- WHOM THEY CONSIDER TO BE THE MOST SELFISH AND UNCOOPERATIVE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY, AND THE GERMANS -- WHOSE AWESOME ECONOMIC STRENGTH IS COMPOUNDED BY THE ADDITIONAL POWER THAT COMES FROM PARTICIPATION IN QUADRIpartite FORA. FOR PEOPLE LIKE THORN, IT IS NOT ONLY GALLING BUT DISCOURAGING TO BE TOLD, WHEN HE SUGGESTS TO SCHMIDT OR TO GISCARD D'ESTAING THAT THE COMMUNITY SHOULD

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PAGE 03 LUXEMB 00191 161638Z

CONSULT WITH THE U.S. ON A PARTICULAR ISSUE, THAT SUCH CONSULTATIONS HAVE BEEN GOING ON FOR SOME TIME.

4. THERE IS NO DANGER THAT THORN WILL ACTIVELY OPPOSE US VIEWS BECAUSE HE FEELS EXCLUDED FROM THE CONSULTATION PROCESS. HE IS TOO WELL DISPOSED TOWARD THE UNITED STATES AND TOO PRAGMATIC FOR THAT. THORN'S REACTION, IF THE PRESENT TREND CONTINUES, WILL MUCH MORE LIKELY SHOW ITSELF IN AN INCREASING LACK OF INTEREST IN THE US-EUROPEAN DIALOGUE. HE AND THE LEADERS OF OTHER SMALLER EUROPEAN STATES ARE OFTEN SYMPATHETIC TO US VIEWS AND WE MAY THEREFORE FORFEIT THEIR POTENTIAL ADVOCACY WITHIN THE EEC AND ELSEWHERE BY RELYING TOO HEAVILY ON THE QUADRIpartite APPROACH.

5. THE FUTURE OF QUADRIpartite DIPLOMACY MAY IN ANY CASE BE MOOT AFTER THE FRENCH ELECTIONS IF A GOVERNMENT OF THE LEFT COMES TO POWER. BUT WOULD WE THEN RESORT TO TRIpartite DIPLOMACY? AND IF WE DID, GIVEN SCHMIDT'S MERCURIAL TEMPERAMENT, WOULD WE THEN BE DRIVEN INTO THE POSITION OF A TRULY SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BRITISH THAT WILL MAKE A MOCKERY OF OUR AVOWED SUPPORT FOR EUROPEAN UNIFICATION?

6. IT DOES NOT SEEM TO ME THAT THERE IS ANYTHING INHERENT IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES THAT FORCES US TO CHOOSE ANY PARTICULAR PATTERN OF CONSULTATIONS. ON THE CONTRARY, THERE IS PLENTY OF ROOM FOR FLEXIBILITY. IF WE EXERCISE MORE SELECTIVITY ON ISSUES AND INTERLOCATORS, AND IF WE CONSULT WITH THE SMALLER COUNTRIES ON MORE ISSUES INCLUDING SENSITIVE ISSUES, WE MAY BE ABLE TO MOBILIZE MORE SUPPORT ON A BROADER BASIS FOR POLICIES WHEN WE NEED TO DO SO.

7. I HAVE TWO SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS:

(A) USE THE POLITICAL DIALOGUE WITH THE EEC MORE EXTENSIVELY. THE GYMNIKH MECHANISM WORKS WELL ON A VARIETY OF CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 LUXEMB 00191 161638Z

ISSUES, THE SMALLER EUROPEAN STATES LIKE IT, AND IF WE INCLUDE MORE ISSUES AND DISCUSS THEM IN GREATER DEPTH THE NINE MIGHT FOLLOW SUITE.

(B) INFORM SOME OF THE SMALLER STATES ABOUT CONSULTATIONS IN RESTRICTED GROUPS. AGAIN, WE CAN BE SELECTIVE. FOR EXAMPLE IT MIGHT MAKE SENSE TO KEEP THORN, WHO THRIVES ON "INSIDE INFORMATION," UP TO DATE ON OTHER ISSUE THAT WOULD BE OF LITTLE INTEREST TO OTHER SMALL STATE LEADERS. IN ANY CASE, I WOULD THINK THAT IT WOULD BE IN OUR INTEREST TO ENSURE THAT ALL OF OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES -- INCLUDING THE SMALLER ALLIES - LEARN ABOUT OUR THINKING ON ANY ISSUE FROM US RATHER THAN FROM THE FRENCH, GERMANS OR BRITISH. LOWENSTEIN

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